

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously presented) An apparatus for orienting a part, the part having been detached from a web having a plurality of parts, the apparatus comprising:

a duct including an interior sloped side, the interior sloped side creating a first opening for receiving the part, a second opening that is smaller than the first opening, and a third opening that is larger than the second opening,

wherein the first, second and third opening are vertically aligned along at least one edge thereof; and

wherein the part exits the third opening in a substantially vertical orientation.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a machine for detaching the part from the web;

wherein the duct is coupled to the machine so that the part is received by the first opening of the duct after being detached from the web.

3. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the machine includes a punch and a die, the die including an opening through which the part passes before the part is received by the duct.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the interior sloped side is made of one of the group consisting of polymeric material and polished metal.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the interior sloped side is planar.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the part has a curled shape, the apparatus further comprising:

a container for holding the part, the container including an open end and a convex contoured end;

wherein the open end of the container is coupled to the duct to receive the part from the third opening of the duct; and

wherein the convex contoured end of the container substantially conforms to the curled shape of the part.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the container accommodates a plurality of parts with a curled shape stacked upon each other.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the container is coupled to the duct using a u-shaped channel.

Claims 10-20 (Canceled)

21. (Previously presented) An apparatus for orienting a part having a curled shape, the part having been detached from a web having a plurality of parts, the apparatus comprising:

a duct including an interior sloped side, the interior sloped side creating a first opening for receiving the part, a second opening that is smaller than the first opening, and a third opening that is larger than the second opening,

wherein the first, second and third opening are vertically aligned along at least one edge thereof;

a container for holding the part, the container including an open end and a convex contoured end;

wherein the open end of the container is coupled to the duct to receive the part from the third opening of the duct; and

wherein the convex contoured end of the container substantially conforms to the curled shape of the part.

22. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the container accommodates a plurality of parts with a curled shape stacked upon each other.

23. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the container is coupled to the duct using a u-shaped channel.

Claims 24-27 (Canceled)

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one edge is opposite the interior sloped side.

29. (New) An apparatus for orienting a part, the apparatus comprising:

a die having a die opening, wherein the die opening comprises a substantially rectangular vertical cross section that allows the part to pass therethrough; and

a duct disposed below the die opening, wherein the duct comprises an interior sloped side that creates a first opening for receiving the part after the die opening and a second opening that allows the part to pass therethrough;

wherein the interior sloped side partially obstructs a portion of the die opening, and wherein the part exits the second opening in a substantially vertical orientation.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising a container disposed below and vertically aligned with the second opening for receiving and stacking a plurality of parts.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the container comprises a convex contoured end.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the container is coupled to the duct using a u-shaped channel.

33. (New) The apparatus of claim 29, further comprising a punch for detaching the part from a web having a plurality of parts.

34. (New) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the second opening is smaller than the first opening.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the interior sloped side further creates a third opening that is larger than the second opening, and wherein the first, second and third openings are vertically aligned along an edge opposite the interior sloped side.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the duct includes a plurality of substantially parallel interior sloped sides.